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Release of EPA slideshow raises more Dimock questions

SCRANTON TIMES TRIBUNE A leaked Environmental Protection Agency slideshow presentation showed natural gas drilling could cause "significant damage" to drinking water through migrating methane, something the federal agency did not look for when it spent months in the heavily drilled Dimock Twp. in 2011-12. The slideshow revealed the federal agency was told methane migration from natural gas drilling posed a threat to drinking water, a main concern of residents of Dimock. Environmental groups called on the EPA to revisit the Susquehanna County township. "The PowerPoint raises important questions about how EPA came to its determination that the water in Dimock was OK to drink when it points to the possibility of significant long-term contamination," said Kate Sindig of the Natural Resources Defense Council. The slideshow discusses isotopic analysis - a means of determining the origin of natural gas in water. The isotopic analysis presented in the slideshow could distinguish between gas from shallow pools and those from deep rock formations. David Yoxtheimer of Penn State University's Marcellus Center for Outreach and Research said the isotope analysis discussed in the EPA presentation is less than exact and could result in a false positive. "The isotopic signatures of some of these gases are close and overlap," he said. "It's not a slam-dunk diagnostic tool." The EPA said the slideshow was the work of an on-scene coordinator. It has not been peer reviewed and does not reflect the official agency position. "The EPA will consider this information, along with tens of thousands of other data points, as a part of its ongoing and comprehensive National Study on the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing," said EPA spokeswoman Alisha Johnson. The leaked presentation emerged almost exactly one year after the EPA closed its investigation into Dimock water contamination saying "sampling and an evaluation of the particular circumstances at each home did not indicate levels of contaminants that would give EPA reason to take further action." While methane was central to the concerns of residents, evidenced by dramatic images of water from faucets flaring flames, the EPA tests were limited to contaminants in the Safe Drinking Water Act, which do not include methane. The agency scrutinized levels of hazardous substances such as arsenic, barium and manganese and declared them within safe levels in Dimock. In some cases, water treatment brought water back into safe levels. The EPA declared Cabot Oil & Gas no longer had to provide drinking water to residents. The industry touted the findings as absolving drilling activity of connection to water contamination. Methane, in fact, is not considered a contaminant, noted Ms. Sindig, and no federal agency has established levels that are safe or pose a threat. But the Natural Resources Defense Council believes it should be looked at. The EPA viewed water quality in the most narrow sense instead of looking at the broader context of the potential long term impacts, Ms. Sindig said. While not identified as a serious contaminant, studies show that methane enhances other contaminants in water, Ms. Sindig said. "We think the public deserves an explanation. Why didn't the agency didn't go further in light of what was being presented by to them?" Cabot has long held that methane in Dimock groundwater was naturally occurring and existed long before drilling began in the region. "The drinking water in Dimock has been thoroughly and repeatedly tested over the past several years," a Cabot statement read. "The Environmental Protection Agency, state authorities and third-party experts have all tested the water." Mr. Yoxtheimer said cases of natural gas migration have decreased as the industry gets a more refined knowledge of the geology. Well construction improved thanks to regulations passed in 2011. Pre-drilling water testing and baseline groundwater monitoring are commonplace, he said, and perhaps should include isotopic analysis of methane.

BLUEFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH

Delegation prepares to confront EPA on coal

Absent from the official invitation list for that ballyhooed trip to confront the Environmental Protection Agency in a Thursday protest against what are perceived as paralyzing regulations on coal are any legislators from the heart of the southern coalfields. And one southern lawmaker, while expressing confidence in the ability of those invited to carry coal's message to the White House, is keenly disappointed. Moreover, a Republican leader in the House, reminded that no one from his party made the guest list either, termed the visit a public relations gimmick. Heading the entourage destined Thursday for the nation's capital via bus tentatively are Senate President Jeffrey Kessler, D-Marshall and House Speaker Tim Miley, D-Harrison. The list also is to include a representative of industry and the United Mine Workers of America, but a complete roster was unavailable Tuesday from state Democratic headquarters in Charleston. "I have full confidence in those going, but the heart of the coalfields should be represented as well," said Sen. Daniel Hall, D-Wyoming, who voiced his desire to the Democratic leadership that he be asked to attend. "It would be easy to name 15 people from the coalfields in the House and Senate who should be first on the list." Not only were southern lawmakers snubbed, but ditto for the Republicans, prompting criticism by House Minority Whip Daryl Cowles, R-Morgan, who said it is plain to see that West Virginia's economy has suffered by the EPA's assault on the coal industry. "West Virginia Democrats must join with us to fight for our people and jobs, with actual real legislative action, not public relations stunts like this partisan bus trip," Cowles said. Cowles said the GOP has offered several "strong bills" to reverse the Obama administration on coal regulations, but the Democratic leadership has failed to act on them. "Let's stand together, let's work together," the Republican leader said. "I am disappointed in the state Democrat leadership. Now is the time to be united as West Virginians, not play politics." Only one member of West Virginia's delegation in Congress, Rep. Nick Rahall, D-W.Va., plans to sit in on the meeting with EPA officials. In advance of the meeting, Rahall said he is "delighted" to have members of his political party and home state demonstrating on behalf of the coal industry. "The policies of this EPA are hurting Democratic coal miners just as much as they are hurting Republican coal miners, and if we want to help coal miners of both parties and their families, we need to recognize that," he said. "We need this administration to get the message loud and clear that members of both parties are strongly opposed to those ill-considered, anti-coal policies." State Democratic Chairman Larry Puccio announced the trip last week during legislative interims at the Capitol but offered no specifics on what EPA regulations were objectionable. For several years, Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin and others have been locked in battle with the EPA over what they routinely have labeled "a war on coal." Tomblin took the administration to federal court and won reversals in some areas of the legal struggle over regulations.

Observers say drillers' woes stem from arrogance

ASSOCIATED PRESS PITTSBURGH - The boom in oil and gas fracking has led to jobs, billions in royalties and profits, and even some environmental gains. But some experts say arrogance, a lack of transparency and poor communication on the part of the drilling industry have helped fuel public anger over the process of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. "It's a big issue for the industry. I have called for greater transparency. That is the only way to have an honest conversation with the public," said John Hofmeister, a former Shell Oil Co. president and author of "Why We Hate Oil Companies." As an example, Mr. Hofmeister said, some industry leaders have suggested that the fracking boom has never caused water pollution. But while the vast majority of wells don't cause problems, "everybody knows that some wells go bad." One of the biggest promoters of the Marcellus Shale drilling boom in Pennsylvania says that while fracking opponents have exaggerated some risks, the industry hasn't always handled key issues well, either. Terry Engelder, a Penn State geologist, cited the highly publicized case in Dimock, where 18 families began complaining in 2009 that nearby drilling had polluted their water supply with methane and toxic chemicals. State environmental regulators ultimately agreed, imposing large fines on Cabot Oil & Gas Co, and temporarily banning the company from drilling in a 9-square-mile area around the town. Cabot paid the fines but denied responsibility for the contamination. Mr. Engelder said at least some of the industry's missteps have been unintentional and stem from inexperience. In Dimock, the land had so many layers of rock and the drilling boom was so new that both the industry and regulators struggled to understand and explain the problems with the water wells, Mr. Engelder said. Cabot spokesman George Stark said that in retrospect, the company realized the geology around Dimock was "highly unusual" and that pre-drilling tests for methane would have helped determine which wells had natural contamination of methane. While many issues were at play, Mr. Engelder said, experts came to believe that the well construction techniques used in the early years of Pennsylvania's drilling boom "were just inadequate to the task" of protecting groundwater. Regulations for well cement jobs were later strengthened, but by that time, anger and negative publicity had started and the damage was done. Mr. Engelder and Mr. Hofmeister say that to the

industry's credit, the drilling boom has brought many benefits. Many communities haven't had major problems and welcome the jobs and the royalty payments that can reach hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars for a single landowner. But Mr. Engelder said the industry can't just focus on positives. "There never will be a risk-free gas industry in Pennsylvania, just like there never will be risk-free driving a car," he said. Mr. Engelder said he believes the industry should work more closely with opponents and give them detailed explanations of the geology, the risks and the benefits of drilling. "I would do whatever it took to try and engage these people over a period of time," he said. But some industry critics are skeptical. "You can't change the spots on a leopard," said Jim Switzer, a Dimock resident who says drilling ruined his water. "They would spend a billion dollars to say they weren't responsible for something rather than spend a couple million dollars of taking care of who they screwed."

Obama energy chief: 'Challenges we face are serious'

COAL TATTOO

As Vicki Smith from The Associated Press reports (see today's Gazette), Obama Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz paid a visit to the agency's laboratory in Morgantown, W.Va., yesterday, and touted the administration's commitment to helping find a path for the coal industry in a carbon-constrained world: President Obama and the U.S. Department of Energy are committed to a role for coal in a national energy strategy, and they've backed it up with research spending, Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said Monday. In a visit to the National Energy Technology Laboratory in Morgantown — the only one of the federal government's 17 national labs dedicated to fossil fuels — Moniz said the administration has spent \$6 billion on clean-coal technology with an emphasis on the capture, storage and reuse of carbon emissions. "We have an 'all of the above' strategy, and it's real," he said. But the administration also believes the U.S. must prepare for a low-carbon economy, so scientists must help find ways to use coal and gas more cleanly. Moniz spoke to hundreds of federal employees who work at the West Virginia lab, and to those who watched remotely from research sites and small offices in Pennsylvania, Oregon, Alaska and Texas. In all, the national lab employs 1,426 people, about 850 of whom are contractors. There was additional coverage from West Virginia MetroNews, the Morgantown Dominion Post, Bloomberg BNA, the National Journal, and West Virginia Public Broadcasting. It's important to look closely at some of the portions of Secretary Moniz's speech that were highlighted by the Energy Department: The challenges we face are serious. We are already beginning to feel the effects of climate change — floods, heat waves and droughts are becoming more severe, driving up food and energy prices. And rising temperatures and more intense storms pose a serious threat to our infrastructure throughout the country. In the last four years, we've more than doubled renewable energy generation from wind and solar power. However, coal and other fossil fuels still provide 80 percent of our energy, 70 percent of our electricity, and will be a major part of our energy future for decades. That's why any serious effort to protect our kids from the worst effects of climate change must also include developing, demonstrating and deploying the technologies to use our abundant fossil fuel resources as cleanly as possible. The efforts underway here at NETL's Morgantown campus, as well as its other research facilities, are an important part of a much larger portfolio of clean fossil fuel technologies across the Department of Energy and across the country. The U.S. Energy Information Administration projects increases in U.S. coal utilization in 2013, and other countries have been increasing their imports of coal. No discussion of U.S. energy security and reducing global CO2 emissions is complete without talking about coal — and the technologies that will allow us to use this resource more efficiently and with fewer greenhouse gas emissions. This is why, since President Obama took office, the Department of Energy has invested more than \$6 billion to clean coal technologies — particularly in carbon capture, utilization, and storage — helping to ensure that fossil energy use is cleaner, safer, and more sustainable. In West Virginia, the real challenge for the coal industry is not only finding ways to operate safely and reduce — perhaps eliminate — negative impacts on coalfield communities — but also figuring out the way to make carbon capture and storage, or CCS, work. The Congressional Research Service has a good primer out about CCS ... Might make good roadtrip reading for West Virginia officials who are heading out west to learn about "future funds" and especially for West Virginia Democrats who are traveling to Washington to complain about Obama administration coal policies.

Report: Most U.S. pipelines go uninspected

SUSTAINED OUTRAGE

The U.S. Energy Information Administration is reporting in the latest edition of its "Today in Energy": A notable increase since early 2012 in natural gas production in West Virginia and nearby counties in southern Pennsylvania

continued through July 2013. Although producers have increasingly shifted their attention to more liquids-rich shale gas in the wet gas regions of these states, production in the dry gas regions has benefitted from the addition of infrastructure, improving takeaway capacity from their gas fields. From July to September last year, the following projects expanded the production capacity of West Virginia and southern Pennsylvania by almost 1 billion cubic feet per day (Bcf/d): **July 2012:** Equitrans placed its Sunrise Project into full service, with capacity to carry 0.31 Bcf/d from Wetzel County, West Virginia, to Greene County, Pennsylvania, and providing access to five separate interconnections serving Mid-Atlantic consumers. **September 2012:** Dominion Transmission initiated service from the four new compressor stations and 110 miles of new pipeline built for its Appalachian Gateway Project, providing capacity to carry 0.47 Bcf/d of natural gas from production areas in West Virginia and southern Pennsylvania to an interconnect with the Texas Eastern Transmission Pipeline. **September 2012:** Equitrans placed into service its newly built 0.20 Bcf/d Blacksville Compressor Station in Monongalia County, West Virginia. Given all of that, the latest information made public by the group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility is certainly interesting: Only a small fraction of America's vast network of natural gas and hazardous liquid pipelines has undergone any sort of inspection in recent years, including several hundred pipelines which have spilled or broken down, according to federal records displayed today by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). As a result, the safety and reliability of much of this key but volatile transport grid remains unknown. Only a small fraction of America's vast network of natural gas and hazardous liquid pipelines has undergone any sort of inspection in recent years, including several hundred pipelines which have spilled or broken down, according to federal records displayed today by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER). As a result, the safety and reliability of much of this key but volatile transport grid remains unknown. Records obtained from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) by PEER under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that – Of the more than 2.6 million oil, natural gas and propane pipeline miles regulated by PHMSA less than a fifth (583,692) has been inspected by federal or state officials since 2006; Another 132,300 miles has been inspected by their operators during that same period but PHMSA cannot say whether any industry inspections have been independently reviewed; and Since 2006, there have been more than 300 incidents, such as a spill, explosion or breakdown, which triggered no follow-up inspection. Despite these figures, PHMSA's latest annual report on November 30, 2012 to Congress on inspection and enforcement needs is less than one page long and mentions no need or even desire to increase inspections. PEER counsel Kathryn Douglass, noting that the present rate of less than one thousand federal and state inspections each year offers no hope of keeping pace, said: At the current rate, most of our oil and gas pipeline network will not be inspected in this generation. Inspections are supposed to prevent damaging incidents but the main way pipeline deficiencies now become manifest is when ruptures or explosions make them obvious. This approach to pipeline safety is like searching for gas leaks with a lit candle.

Climate rules can boost economy, McCarthy says in first public speech

GREENWIRE In her first public appearance as U.S. EPA administrator, Gina McCarthy said the agency will "reinvent how we view the business of climate change" by working with the industry to boost the economy while implementing President Obama's climate change plan. McCarthy, speaking this morning at Harvard Law School, said the Climate Action Plan was an opportunity to "bend the curve" and could "fuel the complementary goals of turning America into a magnet for new jobs and manufacturing." "For too long we've been focused on this false choice. It's not a choice between the health of our children and the health of our economy," McCarthy said at an event sponsored by Harvard's Environmental Law Program. "The truth is we need to embrace cutting carbon pollution as a way to spark business innovation. We need to cut carbon pollution to grow jobs. We need to cut carbon pollution to strengthen the economy. "Let's approach this as an opportunity of a lifetime, because there are too many lifetimes at stake," she added. McCarthy, who was confirmed two weeks ago after a months-long wait, is tasked with a series of complicated rulemakings in the president's second term, headlined by crafting regulations that will limit carbon dioxide emissions from new and existing power plants within the next two years. Although McCarthy called it a "wicked cool exciting time for me," those future rules are already getting blowback from EPA's traditional opponents, who say the plan is another "war on coal" that will penalize existing power plants and bar new coal plants from being built. A letter from 23 House Republicans last week said the plan would "take the unprecedented step of imposing an energy tax by regulatory fiat" (*E&E Daily*, July 24). But McCarthy said that her EPA will work with businesses, states and local partners as it moves forward on the rules, making sure that they can be written in a way that will help the industry and economy. She drew a comparison to the administration's work in lowering fuel economy standards for light-duty vehicles in 2011, which came as a result of negotiations with automakers, environmental groups and

government officials. The result, McCarthy said, was a plan that all sides welcomed and has been implemented "very well so far," with the auto industry predicted to add 35,000 jobs in 2013. That's the "game plan" that EPA will use as it reduces emissions from the power sector and implements other controversial clean air rules, she said. "It's a chance to harness the American entrepreneur spirit, developing new technologies and creating new jobs, while at the same time reducing carbon pollution to help our children and their children," McCarthy said. Doing so, she said, could also help deflect some congressional opposition, including "getting over the hump of proposed 33 percent reduction" in the House appropriations bill, which also includes several riders that would block EPA actions to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. McCarthy this week will launch an "aggressive regional travel schedule" to talk up the climate plan, according to a White House memo. That will include speeches, media appearances and participation in stakeholder meetings to tout the benefits of the plan, as well as talks with state officials to "formulate smart, common-sense and pragmatic solutions to reduction carbon pollution" (*E&E Daily*, July 29). Other administration officials -- including Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack -- are also participating in the summer push to promote the plan. White House climate change adviser Heather Zichal said this month that the administration would work with partners in states and the utility sector on the rulemaking, saying that "we recognize the opportunity" of the emissions reductions (*Greenwire*, July 18). McCarthy has a long reputation of working across party lines and engaging with business groups in crafting rules, a quality that helped her recruit several Republican votes and some business support in her confirmation (*E&E Daily*, July 19). Although the focus of the speech was on the national and international climate change effort, McCarthy took time to assure listeners that there was "no intention of leaving behind the environmental justice" community. She said that the agency would "look at who's not winning" and focus attention on communities that will bear the brunt of climate change. McCarthy, who had to sit through a record-long 136-day nomination process, also joked that the appointment was an "honor of a lifetime ... and that's a very good thing, because I swear it took two lifetimes for me to get confirmed."

New EPA head McCarthy outlines ambitious agenda in Harvard speech

WASHINGTON POST BOSTON — In her first public speech since taking the helm of the Environmental Protection Agency two weeks ago, Administrator Gina McCarthy told an audience at Harvard Law School cutting carbon pollution will "feed the economic agenda of this country." "Climate change will not be resolved overnight," she told the 310-person audience. "But it will be engaged over the next three years. That I can promise you." McCarthy made a full-throated defense of her agency's right to address greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, detailing how the air quality regulations and brownfield cleanup efforts have produced economic benefits in the United States. "Can we stop talking about environmental regulations killing jobs, please?," she asked, prompting loud applause. "We need to embrace cutting edge technology as a way to spark business innovation," her Boston accent so evident in the hard "a" in spark, she then repeated, "And I said 'spaahrk.'" At the start of her remarks McCarthy joked about the challenge she faced in getting her post, noting that being confirmed was "the honor of a lifetime. That's a very good thing, because I swear it took two lifetimes to get confirmed." The speech represented a homecoming for McCarthy, a Boston-area native. Her 27-year old daughter Maggie McCarey, a program coordinator at the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, gave her a glowing introduction in which she noted her mother "perfected her mediating skills" brokering arguments among her three children for the past three decades. McCarey noted that while some might wonder why she would choose to follow in her mother's footsteps, "But for me, the real question is, why would I not want to be like her?" The emotional introduction left the administrator, in her own words, "inside a blubbering idiot, and a proud mom." Recalling how EPA had improved the environment across the country—including in Lowell, Mass., where she watched the river run blue, yellow and other colors depending on what dyes the textile mills dumped in the water,—McCarthy said the agency remains committed to making environmental progress. "And frankly, that still is, everywhere. And we're not going to stop looking at the science. And we're not going to stop driving for improvements." She identified climate change as the agency's top priority, saying it would model its efforts on the stricter fuel efficiency standards for cars and light trucks the administration brokered with the auto industry during its first term. "EPA cannot dictate solutions," McCarthy said. "We have to engage." McCarthy has already been meeting with utility executives and coal industry officials, some of whom fear the administration's plan to limit carbon dioxide emissions from existing plants will shutter many plants. Hal Quinn, president and CEO of the National Mining Association, said during a March 26 meeting with McCarthy

he “found her keenly interested in...our technical assessment of what will transpire because of the rulemaking at EPA” but remains worried the agency will press for an unrealistic carbon standards. “The investments that have been made in utilities that could be jeopardized or stranded because of the [administration’s] rules on greenhouse gas emissions,” noting that the EPA’s 2011 mercury and air toxics rule had already forced utilities to retire at least 40,000 megawatts of coal-fired electricity. At the time, Quinn noted, EPA said the new rule would result in the retirement of 9,000 MW of capacity. “Clearly their forecast was off,” he said. In an interview, McCarthy said the announced closings have come so far ahead of when utilities are required to comply with the new mercury limit, “It’s hard for me to think our rule is the driving factor behind these closures. This is about the abundance of low-cost natural gas. It’s about how utilities are making decisions, company-wide, about how to invest in the future the way they see it right now.” During the speech, McCarthy said the agency would also look at matters including water quality and environmental justice, a hallmark issue for her predecessor, Lisa P. Jackson. “I have no intention of leaving behind environmental justice communities,” she said, adding that they will bear the brunt of climate change. “We need to look at who is not winning in this equation.” On the question of the Keystone XL pipeline, McCarthy said in an interview that the next time EPA would weigh in on the matter would be once the State Department released its final environmental assessment of the revised project. While she did not indicate what position the agency would take, she noted during his June climate speech the president “sent a very strong signal that climate’s impact would be taken into consideration in this decision, and in others.” During the question-and-answer portion of the speech, McCarthy jokingly began to cut off the session once a Sierra Club member posed a question about the Keystone pipeline. But she then vowed to “continue to work with the administration as difficult decisions are made. Charting national environmental policy, she concluded, was somewhat akin to reconciling competing interests among members of of a noisy family. “It’s not supposed to be easy. It’s supposed to be hard. It’s supposed to be all the different voices coming together at screaming at the top of their lungs like three children,” she said, saying she would work to “all those voices to be heard and to listen to them. And it’s my obligation to keep peace in the family, whether it’s my EPA one or my little one.”

New book says military contributes to Bay pollution

CECIL DAILY

There’s an element to the cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay that Richard Albright says hasn’t been adequately addressed, and he hopes his new book will call attention to that element. Albright is a Grasonville resident and environmentalist who recently published “Death of the Chesapeake: A History of the Military’s Role in Polluting the Bay,” which looks at the environmental impact unexploded munitions are having on the health of the Bay. Earlier he wrote another book entitled “Cleanup of Chemical and Explosive Munitions.” Noting there are a number of military installations along the shores of the Bay and its rivers, Albright says 10 to 20 percent of the bombs and shells that wind up on the bottom of the Bay don’t explode and have nitrogen associated with them. Too much nitrogen in the water is a major concern of many in the environmental field. “That’s a lot of explosives and nitrogen, and that nitrogen can cause cancer,” he said. “Various things attach to munitions in the Bay and fish will hide around it. Fish will eat the stuff on the shells. Explosives can leak and the fish absorb what’s leaked.” Albright says there’s a lot of ordnance in the depths of the Bay and many authorities don’t know where some of it is. “Cleanup efforts have not addressed this over the years, and the Bay is getting worse,” he said. Albright is a chemical and weapons expert who works in the environmental field for a local government and has taught courses on protecting the environment. He began his career as a lawyer and then switched to the environmental field. He has written on environmental matters in the past and has also testified on the subject in recent years. He is a past recipient of the Cafritz Award, given by the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation in Washington, which recognizes those in the region who have rendered “exemplary performance” in several fields, including the environment. He won for his work in directing the cleanup of chemical weapons in the nation’s capital. He has studied at Central Michigan University, the University of Michigan, Wayne State University, University of Delaware, and George Washington University, and holds several degrees including a PhD. in environmental health and related issues. Albright says that while many cleanup efforts have been directed at farmers, watermen, and local communities the waters in the open Bay, to the best of his knowledge, have never really been sampled and that’s where a lot of munitions and explosives can be found. He describes his book as a mixture of science, military history and novel solutions for dealing with the degradation of the Bay. He also offers his own ideas for cleaning up the estuary. “To summarize my position, the federal government’s contribution to the Bay’s pollution requires more recognition and effort to clean up than is currently being done.

Munitions should be removed from the main disposal areas and target areas, among other things,” Albright said. “Death of the Chesapeake: A History of the Military’s Role in Polluting the Bay,” was published by Scrivener Publishing in May and has already garnered positive reviews from several experts in the environmental field. It is available in both hardcover and Kindle editions from amazon.com.

Bush to deliver oil-gas address in Pittsburgh

TIMES LEADER

President George W. Bush will address oil and natural gas executives during the fifth annual DUG East conference at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center this fall. The event generally draws hundreds of oil and gas officials from all over the world, including representatives of companies such as Chesapeake Energy, Consol Energy, XTO Energy, Chevron, EQT Corp., Royal Dutch Shell and many others. The 2012 DUG East attracted more than 3,200 attendees and 315 exhibitors to a 45,800-square-foot show floor. The event has also drawn anti-fracking protesters to the downtown Pittsburgh streets. Bush, a Republican who served as president from January 2001 to January 2009, received a bachelor's degree in history from Yale University in 1968. He also obtained a master's degree in business administration from Harvard Business School in 1975. He served as a pilot in the Texas Air National Guard from 1968-74. He began his career as an energy executive in Midland, Texas. In 1994, Bush was elected the 46th governor of Texas. In 2000, he narrowly defeated then-Vice President Al Gore to become the 43rd president. After the presidency, Bush founded the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas. The center is home to the Bush Presidential Museum and Library, which houses George W. Bush's presidential papers. The center is also home to the George W. Bush Institute, a public policy organization that focuses on economic growth, education reform, global health and human freedom. The institute supports the rights of women with its Women's Initiative and honors those who have served in the U.S. armed forces through its Military Service Initiative. Bush returns to the DUG conference series by popular demand. In 2011, he addressed more than 2,500 DUG conference attendees in Fort Worth. The Pittsburgh event is set for Nov. 13-15. Officials expect the DUG conference to provide detailed exploration and drilling activity updates, technology exhibits and peer-to-peer networking for those doing business in the Marcellus and Utica shale regions. It focuses on the growth producers, service companies and local economies are experiencing from developing unconventional oil and gas resources. Though oil and natural gas drilling in Ohio, West Virginia and Pennsylvania has created newfound wealth and job opportunities across the region, some remain concerned fracking will lead to water contamination. Air pollution can also occur because of flaring at well sites and compressor stations. Also, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency states that burning methane natural gas can be up to 20 times more harmful to the atmosphere than burning coal.

Editorial: Maryland's climate opportunity

BALTIMORE SUN (Monday) Gov. O'Malley's road map for aggressively reducing greenhouse gas emissions offers a chance for the state's economy to bloom along with the environment. The dog days of summer are upon us, and most Marylanders are more inclined to reach for beach-friendly paperbacks than a 265-page treatise on climate change. That's a shame, because the latest effort to address greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland — an ambitious plan released last week by Gov. Martin O'Malley — ought to be required reading, particularly by those who dismiss such efforts as too costly or unnecessary. Here's the CliffsNotes version: Climate change is real, it's accelerating, it's potentially disastrous, and Maryland, with its hundreds of miles of coastline, wetlands and coastal development, is more vulnerable than most. The question is not so much whether the state should take aggressive action but how best to meet some reasonable goals. In releasing this latest plan — a road map to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2020 — Governor O'Malley described the work as "hard ... life-and-death hard." He's absolutely correct. None of it will be easy, certain sectors of the economy will feel the pinch more than others, and it would be far less aggravating for Maryland to let others make the needed sacrifices first. But to choose inaction because neighboring states aren't doing as much to reduce emissions (or even because neighboring countries aren't) would be the equivalent of not bailing out a sinking life raft because the other occupants are too slow to do the same. You don't wait, and you don't crow about moral victories or leadership (sorry, environmental community); you do it because you don't want to drown — or for the next generation destined for the raft to drown either. But here's the other point made clearly by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan: This is not a matter of picking your poison or choosing whom to sacrifice, it's actually a potential win-win for Maryland. While it's true that some businesses will face higher costs,

the net effect of reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be more jobs and a boost to Maryland's economy. As a 2011 report by the Regional Economic Studies Institute of **Towson** University pointed out, the new standards should result in a net increase of \$1.5 billion to \$1.7 billion in public and private investment and tens of thousands of jobs. And that's not even counting the economic benefit of improved human health or a cleaner environment from lower pollution. Naysayers may remain skeptical, but Maryland has already taken substantial action to reduce the state's climate change footprint. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has used an emissions cap-and-trade system to invest millions in energy efficiency, clean energy technology and other consumer benefits, and the Clean Cars Program has reduced tailpipe emissions (and raised fuel efficiency standards) — both examples of progress that has already been made without harm to the economy. Perhaps that's not a lot of comfort to people who want cheap, coal-fired electricity and don't care about the sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, mercury and toxic metals — in addition to the carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases — those power plants are pumping into the air. But those jobs are illusory because they are not sustainable. The sooner Marylanders understand that and accept more forward-looking policies, the sooner the state's economy will be positioned for long-term growth and the green jobs that will be a part of it. Can Maryland by itself reverse the global levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere (recently measured by the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** at 400 parts per million, the highest level in 3 million years)? Of course not. But to postpone the needed actions would be like ignoring public pension debt until, like Detroit, it's time to file for bankruptcy. Delay only makes the consequences worse, with this additional caveat: One can survive bankruptcy, but there isn't a spare planet available. The sooner action is taken, the easier the transition will be and the sooner the state will enjoy the benefits of those policies. All that's lacking is the political will. Mr. O'Malley, a possible candidate for president in 2016, obviously intends for his climate change efforts to get noticed beyond Maryland's borders, but that doesn't make them any less correct. Cut past the rah-rah about leading the nation, and the problem remains really simple. Maryland's per-capita greenhouse gas emissions are four times of that of China and twice what Europeans contribute. We need to clean up our act — not only for simple self-preservation but because it presents an economic opportunity as well.

Federal workers asked to submit cost-saving ideas

WASHINGTON POST The White House has launched the latest round in its annual program seeking cost-saving suggestions from federal employees, the SAVE Award. “The President’s last four budgets have included over 80 SAVE Award proposals that are saving hundreds of millions of dollars and improving the way government operates,” Steve Posner, Office of Management and Budget associate director for strategic planning and communications, said in a posting on the OMB site. “We know these ideas alone won’t solve the nation’s long-term fiscal challenges, but they represent common-sense steps to improve government and provide a better value to the American people.” Federal employees submitted more than 85,000 suggestions in the prior four rounds, raising ideas ranging from reducing wasted medicine at Veterans Affairs Department hospitals to using less costly shipping when mailing packages without urgent delivery times. Suggestions in the program, formally the Securing Americans Value and Efficiency Award, are being solicited through Aug. 9. The winner is chosen by online voting and gets a meeting with President Obama and inclusion of the idea in the next White House budget proposal. The award for 2012 went to an Education Department employee from Arlington, Va., Frederick Winter, who suggested that employees who receive subsidies for taking public transit in their commuting shift from regular transit fares to discounted senior fares as soon as they are eligible. In addition to suggestions that have been included in budget proposals, with mixed results, others have been carried out administratively. OMB separately has told agencies that when passing along cost-saving suggestions for possible inclusion in the budget, they should narrow their recommendations to their top three to five ideas, rather than sending five to 10 as in the past. Also, agencies may now submit suggestions made through their own internal employee suggestion programs, in addition to those made through the SAVE Award program. In particular, OMB said it wants to see ideas that could be carried out across several agencies or government-wide.